

**HON. MARCY KAPTUR
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006**

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Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, April 26, the world will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine when it was under Soviet control.

The explosion released into the air radiation equivalent to 90 Hiroshima-size bombs in the heavily populated areas of northern Ukraine, southern Belarus and southwestern Russia.

Millions of people throughout the world were affected by this disaster, and millions more continue to live with its consequences on a daily basis. Some have written about the North European countries being affected by what has been termed "white winds," the white winds that came from Chernobyl. Radioactive contamination continues to harm the health of men, women and children throughout our world. It is critical that we do not allow ourselves to forget the looming consequences of Chernobyl, which are with us still today, lest the tragedy repeat itself. We must remind our fellow Americans and the world that those problems continue to exist, and the countries that were affected by Chernobyl require assistance in resolving them. In order to achieve this goal, the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, in cooperation with the Chernobyl Challenge '06 Coalition, is organizing a series of events at the end of this month to commemorate this solemn anniversary. I am very pleased to cooperate with our co-chairs of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, *Curt Weldon* of Pennsylvania, Congressman *Sander Levin* of Michigan, Congressman *Roscoe Bartlett* of Maryland, along with myself. Tomorrow, April 26, at 10 a.m. here in the Rayburn House Office Building foyer will be a 1-day photo exhibit entitled "Chernobyl 20." The exhibit will

include photographs by some prominent artists illuminating the human stories behind the Chernobyl catastrophe and highlighting the dignity and hope of its survivors. We welcome the public to come tomorrow and view this photo exhibit in the Rayburn House Office Building foyer. It begins at 10 a.m. and will remain there the entire day.

On April 27, the following day, Thursday, from 2 in the afternoon until 6, in HC-6 here in the Capitol, a congressional briefing will feature expert testimony on Chernobyl issues including radiation and health, agriculture and food, environment, economics and U.S. assistance and the containment of the fourth unit reactor. The ambassadors of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia will provide brief remarks to inform about the current situation with respect to Chernobyl and their countries. If citizens are interested, they can contact our office at our Web site, rep.kaptur@mail.house.gov for information.

On Thursday, April 27 as well, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the evening, in B369 Rayburn House Office Building, the Chernobyl Challenge '06 Coalition, in cooperation with our Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, will hold a congressional reception and Members of Congress will have an opportunity to speak. Again, if citizens are interested they can contact our Web site at rep.kaptur@mail.house.gov.

The Congressional Ukrainian Caucus is very grateful that for the briefing that will be held on Thursday, from 2 to 6 in Room HC-6, the Capitol Building, that some of the following speakers will appear, from the Chernobyl Children's Project International and the Children of Chernobyl Relief and Development Fund, their executive directors, several pre-eminent scientists from major organizations, public and private sector universities, talking about the illnesses that plague people today as a result of this huge catastrophe. And then, finally, those who have served as ambassadors to our country and ambassadors from the affected nations will address what we can do in the way of additional international response to meet today's challenges still arising from the Chernobyl catastrophe.

I have never seen birth defects as I have witnessed among the children affected by this continuing tragedy in Chernobyl. The thyroid cancers, the conditions to the heart, the distortions of the human form related to radiation resulting from Chernobyl are horrendous.

The southern part of Belarus is largely depopulated, though some people who are refugees from Afghanistan are moving into the area, incredibly, and eating and planting seeds in the ground and eating contaminated food and infecting themselves even until this day. There is so

much for the American people to understand. Though it was 20 years ago, Chernobyl lives as it will for thousands of years to come.

[Briefing on Chornobyl, Thursday April 27, 2006](#)